Firewall Testing and Certification Panel

John Wack, NIST

This panel will examine a number of issues with regard to testing firewalls, including the following:
- what is the purpose of testing firewalls
- what sorts of tests
- how is the testing performed
- how can the results be interpreted

Firewalls are now being tested and rated by various organizations and journals. These ratings usually include some analysis of how "secure" the firewall is, i.e., how well the firewall lives up to its security claims and how well the firewall stands up to high traffic loads. But, some firewall experts disagree with the concept of rating firewalls for security, with one of the arguments being that the security of a firewall depends on many factors, some of which are difficult to test unless one performs testing on the firewall where it is installed. In other words, a firewall that may be deemed secure in a test environment may be quite the opposite in a different environment. At the same time, many find firewall testing and certification a useful metric for assessing firewalls and determining which firewall is best for their respective sites.

This panel will present several views of testing and certification, with representatives from industry and the DoD. The audience will be encouraged to participate with their own experiences on firewall testing and certification.

John P. Wack
National Institute of Standards and Technology
Computer Security Division, Bldg 820, Rm 426
820 West Diamond St, Gaithersburg, MD 20899
wack@nist.gov, 301-975-3359, fax 301-948-0279